

Interview with Mrs. Goldie Peterson  
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson  
and Miss Lilly Amida Fenctle - April 13, 1978

**TAPE 1 - SIDE 1 & 2**

DODSON: Now Mrs. Peterson I wonder if you would give us your full name and tell us how long you have lived in the valley.

PETERSON: My full name is Goldie ? Peterson and I lived in the valley since November 1, 1903.

DODSON: Were you born here in the valley?

PETERSON: No, I was born in ?Heathen, Nebraska and I came to California by railroad. I came to Los Angeles and we there about two weeks till my father came out to Burbank to find a home to rent for us and we bought furniture in Los Angeles and had it shipped out here by train and it took about two weeks and it came in Burbank.

DODSON: Can you tell us how you happened to move to Burbank.

PETERSON: Yes, my father was working for Mr. Ellison and ? moving cattle for him. And they paid, they gave us a house and a place to live and \$25 a month and with six children it was barely enough to get along on.

DODSON: Even though prices weren't as high as still have been.

PETERSON: No, yes we certainly did. And Mr. Ellison had an orange grove in California and told me if he came to California he'd give him \$2.00 a day picking oranges. Well, my father was a pretty good carpenter and when we got to California he found out they needed carpenters here and so he started...he never did pick oranges. He built houses in Burbank and when he was in Los Angeles working on a hotel when he was accidentally killed, leaving my mother with her six children. And she had another child a few months after he was killed and we were in very straighten circumstances. But my mother was a strong, healthy woman and very determined and very independent and my father died on a June 9, 1905 and then started to work at a laborer ranch, Mrs. Britain's ranch, cutting apricots which dried? Most of the ranches you had apricot orchards, dried them. Sold them dried.

DODSON: The children were old enough too.

PETERSON: I was 8 years old and my sister was 10 and mother worked cutting and my brother 6 and my brother was who 12, picked apricots and we all worked. Every day till the apricots were done. When the apricots were sold and we picked prunes and dried prunes. And then when that was over we had a little spare time before we had to get in school again. Every summer, in fact in high school...I picked apricots and worked in the orchards every summer. So did my brothers and sisters worked summer, not out on the apricots but ? picking oranges and different jobs. My brother had a paper route, the Los Angeles Times he took to Glendale. He had to go to Glendale at 4:00 in morning and pick the papers up at the street corner, alright. He drove his Mustang Ford. My mother had bought for him to use because it was so sandy you couldn't ride a bicycle around the valley.

DODSON: He delivered his papers from...

PETERSON: ? And he delivered papers all around Burbank and up as far as Dundee. Do you know where Dundee in the San Fernando Road. It isn't called that any more but it's between Burbank and Roscoe, about half way between.



DODSON: Do you recall how much you were paid for the picking of the apricots?

PETERSON: Yes, the cutting them...we got \$.12 a box and that's a 60 lb. lug box, not an ordinary box, a 60 lb. box. You cut them or laid out trays to dry and that was \$.12 a box and when I started, when I was 8 years old. I could only do one box a day.

DODSON: Oh my, so you only made \$.12 a day?

PETERSON: And my sister could do and she would make \$.24 a day. And I don't remember what my mother ? more than we did. But the next year I was able to make two and she could three or so. She always could do a little more than I because she's a little older and a little faster with her hands I guess than I was.

DODSON: Do you remember about what you could have bought for that \$.12? What would it have been in purchasing power?

PETERSON: Oh, quite a bit. You get calico to make three dresses for \$.05 a yard. And my mother baked all our bread so I don't know what that would have cost

then. But both back then you could get \$.50 of the meat would feed the whole the family.

DODSON: So it really amounted to more than it sounds like to us.

PETERSON: Oh yes. It sounds like nothing now today or anything. But then we lived on it. My mother never accepted charity. There was only one time she was offered charity. We all went to Christian church and at Sunday school one morning she was asked my father, they told us that there was a family that were destitute, poor and they thought it would nice if everyone could bring a package of something to Sunday school and then they would deliver in ? wagon to the family after, in the afternoon. So we told our mother about it and we'd been paid with the dried apricots as part of our wages, not money you know. We did that too. Mother could use them to ? So she says, "Well, I can spare a bag of apricots." And so picked up a paper bag of apricots and sent them to Sunday school with us that morning and we put that in the ? And so that afternoon my mother and uncle and cousin were sitting and my uncle and cousin were working for Jim Jeffries on the ranch out there but they spent Sunday with us and so they were sitting on the front veranda of the house there

and rocking away and this here wagon drove up in front of our place with all these packages. And my mother was so perturbed and she went in the house. She refused to say she didn't want it. So my uncle went in and talked to her and he says, "You can't do Holly. These people mean well and they've gone to this trouble to bring it to you and I accept it." And he explained to them that she didn't need any more charity and so she did to be gracious so she took it.

DODSON: Yes, that would have hurt the people who did that.

PETERSON: Yes, of course, they were trying to help out you know and they meant well. But she could not accept charity, she was just that type. She was very strong physically and mentally and she just could not accept it. And I'm glad she was that way. I think she raised all of her children the same way.

DODSON: But that's certainly different from the way the thing is now.

PETERSON: Isn't it. Someone had reported that we were a poor family and no father and so on and so they had reported to the county, so someone from the county had come out to see her to investigate. But we were



all in school. She had the five of us...we were always sent to school and we had to buy our own books then because no books were issued you see. And we enough to eat. Our clothes were washed so many times you couldn't tell the color they started with but they were clean and so there was nothing...and so she said she needed no help so she didn't take any.

DODSON: Where were you living at the time?

PETERSON: We were living on Oak Street in Burbank and this was our fine neighbor that gave us the work the first year. The second year my sister...well we only lived out there...we called them a complex...we lived there until about a year and then we moved down on well it was Vine and Flower Street but it's called Western now instead of Vine, Western and Flower. And we had to walk three miles to teacher everyday and we had to go Sunday school every time too. ? So we lived down there about a year and moved out to Butterfield place which was a little farther out. That was Lake ? the Lake and Vine. And walked to school from there. And then finally we moved up on Tijuna, right below the boulevard that was 1970 we lived there. ? about once a year she had all this family. It would have been almost

impossible for her but my grandmother lived with us. She came, moved back, before my father died and she was living with us then grandfather was gone. She was alone. And so she took care of the little ones that weren't in school while my mother could work and the rest of us were in school. So that's where she hadn't had ? it was very hard. And she took care of ? my youngest brother too. When he was born. Dr. Thompson came out though. He was the only doctor in Burbank. He just arrived a few months before Allen was born and he'd driven his horse out to see her. He'd heard of our circumstances. So he'd driven his horse out to tell her that when her time came, well he'd be glad to take care of delivering her child and so he came out when she needed him. He came out there and on way as he was the railroad track a tramp held him up and he only \$2.00 in his pocket but he took that \$2.00 from him, so he was going out to do great service and lost \$2.00 on the way.

DODSON: And that was quite a loss in those days.

PETERSON: And another thing happened at the same time. My sister had borrowed...was loaned, she didn't borrow it...was given a horse by the neighborhood, one of the Betten boys, the next door neighbor, to ride



home from school so she didn't have to walk. He said he'd walk home and she could ride his horse home. She loved to ride. So she riding that horse home and something frightened horse and she made the turn there, well it'd be Victory Blvd. now, it was Main Street then to go over to Oak Street and the horse threw her out into the field and broke her collarbone and I don't know what other injuries she had but anyway was injured. So Dr. Thompson had to see before he could get out to my mother. And Mr. & Mrs. ? lived there on the corner. They're real old timers in Burbank and they had a daughter Clara. So they took her in and Dr. Thompson told my mother she could stay the night with Clara. Well that's happened sometimes when girls would stay overnight with some friends ? But that all happened Sunday night, quite a night.

DODSON: She didn't suffer any permanent injury this time?

PETERSON: Oh no, no, it healed all right. She was all right. And they grew up together, Clara and Elsie went to Occidental College together ?

DODSON: Sometimes when we read all about automobile accidents we forget there could have been accidents with horses too in those days.

PETERSON: Yeah. Well, I believe the horse ran away. ?

DODSON: Well, you went to elementary school here in Burbank, didn't you.

PETERSON: Yes, grammar school. ? And I would have...I didn't get to start the school until January. Although we were here November 1st because the first Sunday you went to Sunday school. Two of the children took down with messels and then the whole family, including my mother and two month brother had the messles. And so my father had to take care of him and I didn't get them. I never had messels. I never had them. So I was a little errand girl. I always got the groceries and my father did the cooking for six people. ? in January. The school house ? square building and it was painted yellow in those days and it had a tower built on it. And there were four classrooms, two downstairs and two upstairs classrooms. And the teacher had two grades, 1st and 2nd, ? And they were very strict in those days. And then the other school, the bell rang at 8:30 that was a warning. I remember at mine you had to line up to go in school and they had the boards put in the front of the entrance in lower side. They were about three feet apart. And on the lower side the boys lined up, the upper side the

girls lined up. The boys always played on one side of the grounds and the girls were never allowed to play together. And the 1st grader would be on the first row, 1st and 2nd grades together, and then the 3rd and 4th go on back. And they had an older boy, beat a drum at the head of stairs and principal stood on one side and another teacher the other side and we marched in in double rows in the school right into the school room and right down to our seat. And we had to stand by our seat until the teacher came in and told us to have a seat. Everything, you had to do just as you were told.

DODSON: You know, as a teacher I think I'd like that.

PETERSON: Well, I liked it as a pupil too. Because there wasn't any confusion that way. You knew just what to do and it was organized, well organized I thought. Well anyway, Florence White was my 1st grade teacher, 1st and 2nd grade. And I had never been school. Of course, the school term was partly over so all the other children were reading in the 1st grade and I couldn't read a word but I knew my alphabet and I knew numbers. I learned that just because my older brother and sister had been in school. But she taught reading by the phonic system and gave a drill every morning. Early in the



morning we had a drill on phonics and sounds and a combination of letters. ? but she was a good teacher. She was excellent and I have my 1st grade report card there. I thought you'd like to see it.

DODSON: Yes, we certainly would like to see it.

PETERSON: Uh-huh. And where I passed into the 2nd grade. And then all the way through. So then I had her for the 2nd grade. I loved her, she was a wonderful teacher. And then I skipped the 3rd grade. And they put me in the 4th grade. And I had another teacher just as nice. She was just a second mother to all of us.

DODSON: Do you remember her name?

PETERSON: Oh yes, June Lucky and her brother John Lucky had owned the grocery store in Burbank. And then she had a brother Henry Lucky. He was ? and lived down on the tracks down the road. And then their father was killed. And they lived on Orange Grove Avenue. ? She lived with her father. ? At this part I imagine she was about 19. ? I should say in her early 20's, a little older than ? The teachers were young. Miss Lucky she looked very straight. Just like they all were. You never ? And you never

spoke or got out of your seat without getting permission. ? And yet she was kind and she explained things that you wanted explained. In fact I don't of a single boy or girl that she had trouble with in school. And I had her in the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grade. She kept moving up with the class because she liked the class. And she always called her girl. Even after I was married and had grandchildren until she died, she'd come to see me sometime, I was one of her girls. She felt that way about us.

DODSON: I was going to say, she went up with you. But you never had any discipline problems that you can remember?

PETERSON: Never. None myself. My brother did. I had a brother Glen. In was in the Burbank school system for 36 years after he was growing up. He turned out alright. And we had a principal in the latter years in grammar school. He was extremely strict. He was a ? to whip the boys when you didn't behave. And mother always told us, if you got punished in school, you got punished when you got home. She meant it too. He got it too. Lyle got punished in school also. The kind that didn't take a chance but he did being a boy. He got in a eraser fight I

think one day. In a chalk and eraser fight while the teacher was out of the room. ? after school. And all the rest of us was never in trouble. As a girl you thought it was terrible. And my teacher, Miss Lucky, didn't like him. In fact she quit teaching school after that year and went back to college. She became an osteopathic surgeon, a doctor. He had another teacher ? hold the boys down in the hall over an apple box. He put them over this big ? five or six hits or whatever he thought they deserved.

DODSON: I can the teachers would be very cautious about doing that nowadays.

PETERSON: No, I don't think it would ever happen today at all, never. But what I was going to say while it seems too severe to me at the time, and we didn't like this principal for it either. You know there are those who didn't get punished we felt sorry for people who were punished right there. But after those boys graduated from grammar school on graduation time, he took them all on a picnic at Echo Park or was called East Lake Park, it was called Echo Park in those days. And had them go out on boat rides in the lake and feed them popcorn and peanuts and took them and gave them their lunch, the



whole day, a day's picnic in Echo Park. Well, those boys just worshiped him for that. They thought it was just wonderful, taking them to that. And they were so onry in school you know. But several of them keep track of him until he died, all the years they kept track of him and looked him up and would see.

LILLY: Were there only boys the ones that went to the picnic.

PETERSON: Yes, I think so. He just had all those boys. Oh yeah, they never put boys and girls together on things like that. Not in those days they didn't.

DODSON: Not even on a picnic. They wouldn't let the boys and girls together?

PETERSON: Well, little they were. But the older ones, he didn't he had all just boys. You generally had to keep them separate until they got in high school they went together. I mean there'd be a picnic with boys and girls but not in grammar school.

DODSON: Of course, I really don't know much about how are grammar schools operate now so I don't know whether it's a...

PETERSON: I don't either but I don't think they keep them separate now. I know that ? Of course I blame a lot of the problems that they have with education on home discipline as well as discipline in schools. But I think we were disciplined at home too, you know. People raised their children to behave and it wasn't just in school. And I think of course the problem now that so many children are, well I started back in 1920, I went back to college. I was married soon after I graduated from high school and I didn't go to college until about four years later. Because my brother had come back from World War I and he was going to UC Southern Branch which is UCLA. So he asked me to go with him. My husband objected because he thought people would think it was funny. Me going to college, you know I'm married and maybe he wasn't supporting me or something. And I said, "Nonsense, I have not...I'm going to get a better education and I'm going to get and I want it." ? When we were in college and I was taking this teacher's preparatory course and Lou had told them that we were not to tell the children what to do and what not to do that they were to let them find their own thing to do and the only...they could anything you told them. That they could do anything they wanted as long as they didn't bother or harm you. Well to me, that isn't a discipline.

Because you can't do everything you want either if you don't bother or harm anybody. You have to organize yourself and organize the things you do and you just can't run here and yonder...on a leash. That's what the matter with a lot of people. They don't know how to organize their lives either. So I really think that was the wrong method. But anyway that was the method we were taught. I didn't teach. I got my credentials as a teacher and I...but I never taught school, I worked for my husband. We needed more money and we needed money so ?

DODSON: I see. So you had received your credentials.

PETERSON: Oh yes, I still have my credentials. My certificate is here, back in 1921.

DODSON: Is that right? Was there much or any vandalism when you were in school. We have so much of that at the present time.

PETERSON: No, none whatsoever. In grammar school or high school. And there were no tobacco revenues in school. Of course, they never heard of dope. I never hear nothing about that. But there was no tobacco allowed. When were not pleased with Mr. Mills, the principal who used a club, the boys saw



him walking around the school ground one day and he was spitting out the brown juice and they thought he was chewing tobacco so he was reported by someone to the Board of Trustees. So the Board of Trustees had a meeting at school and they were all bleakly waiting because they thought sure enough Mr. Mills was going to be wrong. You know how children are. So he told them that he was just chewing prunes for his health, he wasn't chewing tobacco. He might have done it but he probably did sitting to get the boys upset, that's all he did.

DODSON: I hope you wouldn't do a thing like that.

PETERSON: No, but that's just an old thing that happened at school in those days that you remember for some reason. We had just basic subjects in school. We did have art and music though in grammar school. And we learned to sing by note first. I remember I liked it. I enjoyed it, I liked music. And I enjoyed it and Miss Lucky was very good. And we learned to sing all the songs by note rather than words, so to read the notes and sing that way. And we'd learn two parts. And the Pommory girls, that's an old family. ? she had little girls in the school. And she only had one or two in the same room that I was in and they were very good. They

were really good at singing. So she'd have one part of lead sing the second and one part of them sing the other you know. And we'd learn to sing both. And then we'd harmonize of course and we finally learned that we could sing the words and then harmonize it. And I loved her. I loved the way she taught music. I think she did a very good job with children, you know teach them to sing, both 5th and 6th graders and so on. But they all learned to read notes and all the different keys too. So it didn't make any difference ? We had no instruments in school. She just had a pitch pipe. ? and we learned from that. We learned to sing and the notes.

DODSON: Goldie, do you have questions about ?

PETERSON: No, I think I've said everything. ? I loved to read. I didn't know how to read in school.

(INAUDIBLE)

DODSON: I wanted to ask you what sort of books you read. Now no one has told us anything about this so if you can remember the names of some of the books that you were taught to read.

PETERSON: Well, I remember Swiss Family Robinson and Mark Twain's book too. I can't remember all of them...Little Women.

DODSON: That was Louisa May Allcot?

PETERSON: Yes, Louisa May Allcot. And I use to love the ? book stories. Because the boy is always the hero and in a poor family you know and it seemed to apply to us.

DODSON: It always held up ?

PETERSON: Oh I know, they were going to take the mortgage off of the old homestead or something. But I liked to read them. I read them over and over. And I liked fairy stories when I was younger I read lots of fairy stories.

DODSON: Did you read Grimm's Fairytale and Hans Christian Anderson.

PETERSON: Oh my yes. I've seen Hans Christian's home in Norway. I've been there. And I enjoyed it so much.  
?



DODSON: I'm not sure. I've been there. But I wasn't quite sure myself.

PETERSON: I'm not sure. The guide that we had kept telling me how to pronounce different things you know in their language but I still had ? couldn't speak...?

DODSON: Well, I'm not very good at foreign pronunciations but I have an excellent of getting pronounced correctly now.

PETERSON: Oh do you.

DODSON: Lilly is from Ecuador.

PETERSON: Oh how nice. I had two years of Spanish at school and I enjoyed too. And I still remember some the songs I learned in Spanish at school. Sing them now when I'm washing dishes. We took a trip into the Caribbean when I was young to speak Spanish and ? and Puerto Rico and ? And they spoke Spanish and so it helped because I'd ask a question here and there to find out things.

LILLY: Do you still remember the Spanish.

PETERSON: Oh a little, very little but I can understand it better than I speak it I guess. I never had...you know you really have to use it to remember it. But I liked it, I had two years in high school. I had two years of Spanish in high school. And my grandmother was German, spoke German a lot. And so I learned some German from her. I'm sure my mother could speak German too, although she didn't, she spoke English to her children. But I'm sorry they didn't have us speak German. We could have learned to speak well if she had of.

DODSON: That is the best way to learn it, at home.

PETERSON: The best way to learn it. You get the right accent and pronunciation if you learn it that way. Oh I learned a few things ? a few things that she gave her children. ? I think if I were in Germany six months or so I could learn to speak German though because I heard it so much and it would come back to me.

DODSON: Yes, I think that's true of a language.

PETERSON: And if you were there and spoke nothing but German I think it come to you. ? Well, let's see...we've

gone from schools. ? I went to high school at  
Burbank High School. I entered in 1913. In 1910.

DODSON: I was going to say, where was the high school  
located?

PETERSON: On San Fernando Road and Cypress Avenue at the  
corner where the junior high school is now. That's  
the old high school. And it was built the last year  
I was in grammar school was the first year it was  
opened. And there wasn't very many pupils to start  
with. ? I don't imagine there was 100 all  
together, maybe not that many. But I know the  
first...there was 17 I think in my graduating class.  
And that was 1916. I started in 1910 but I had to  
stay out part of the year. My mother needed me to  
help at home. ? I had more units that I needed but  
I went on the next year. It didn't make any  
difference to me.

DODSON: Do you remember what sort of courses you took?

PETERSON: Oh that would be every year I remember. Yes, I had  
four years of english. ? And two years of  
mathematics, algebra and geometry, two years of  
Spanish and two years of manual training, two years  
of art.



DODSON: Oh, the girls took manual training at that time?

PETERSON: Oh yeah, I built a desk and a bookcase and ? And we made baskets, you know those baskets. ?

DODSON: Was that unusual? Were you the only one that took it or did many girls take it?

PETERSON: Well, not many. I can't think of another one right now but I assume that through the years they did. But there'd be mostly boys in the class. My brother took manual training. And he was good at it. He built a nice little desk for my mother. I wish I had it now. ? I just bought an antic old desk and \$625 for it. And I'd like to have his ?

LILLY: What did the people say when you were taking that course?

PETERSON: Which course? Oh manual training? We had our only teacher.

DODSON: Is that right. I had thought maybe with their attendance issues, segregate the two sexes they would have thought manual training boys and cooking and sewing for the girls.

PETERSON: Well no, in high school the boys and girls were in the same classes. They had the same classes. And then boys could have taken cooking but they didn't. I took cooking one year too, cooking and sewing. And I also had bookkeeping and typing, a year. And I guess that's about all. Oh, physical education, which I liked very much. I had four years of that, every year. ? in those days like it is now. But there were three of us with the same heighth and weight and two of us were blonde and other one had dark curly hair and we use to learn all those folk dances and we use to dance it at these different entertainment ? And we'd dance these different dances at the dance and we like to do it. And we occasionally to ask about the teenage social life.

DODSON: Yes, we are interested in that.

PETERSON: Most all of it was through the schools or church. When I was small most of the social life we had was ? with your friends was the church social. We have a nice school social in the summertime and then at Christmas time we'd work weeks and weeks and weeks getting ready for the Christmas ? We'd go Grand Canyon and pick the California holly berries and string rows along with popcorn which it was nice and make chains or anything we could do to get that tree

trimmed and worked and loved it. That was part of...

DODSON: You mentioned the ice cream social. Can you tell us a little more about that exactly. What you did at an ice cream social. What it was?

PETERSON: Yes. The social we had was ? of course not everyone was there. And it was definitely ISF Hall, which we built a brick block, that was the only place big enough to have such a thing I guess. And I remember they had four black people come out from Los Angeles sang. They were quartet harmonize. And I'd never seen a black person before in my life. And I never heard anyone sing as well as they sang either. I just always remember them sang that...? And I wished and wished they'd have them again. I never did hear them again. That was the big highlight of that social to me. Although they served, the ladies would make cake, the church ladies and I don't know who made the ice cream, it had to be homemade. And we had ice cream and cake and they listened. They didn't do anything in particular except get together and talk and we had this quartet sing sometimes and that was it.

DODSON: I wondered whether you danced or anything like that.



PETERSON: Not at the church they didn't. We did at school functions in high school. We had a band at high school dances and sometimes they had them in the school but the hall wasn't big enough. They danced ? at the hall there and I don't know why they didn't use the gymnasium. But the orchestra was just...well me and my girlfriends played the violin and her brother played the trombone and another girlfriend played the piano and that would be our dance orchestra. And we would get someone else to play a trumpet or something you know and that would be the orchestra. There was never any hired music or anything like that. ?

DODSON: What were the most popular dances at that time.

PETERSON: Waltz and the two step was the only thing we danced. Later one step came out, about the last year I was in high school. And we had a...I remember very well because we had a dance and they rented Forrest Hall which was a hall that was built later, you know when we were senior in high school. And we were dancing the waltz and two step and my husband was there. I was dancing with my husband but I'd met before that but he happened to be there. ? And he had learned this one step back east before he came here. He liked to dance too. So he was showing us the one

step. And you know in the old days with the two step you would dance side by side and of course the one step you danced facing each other. And Mrs. Horn objected. ? Because we'd face each other instead of alongside of each other.

DODSON: You've probably seen on television the way dancing is going now.

PETERSON: Oh yeah, I think of that many times. Many times I think of that and Mrs. Horn. We did afterwards because they danced the one step for a long time after that. And they came out with other dances later on. ?

DODSON: Nowadays, they don't seem to get close to each other.

PETERSON: No, never just stand and talk that's all. Well, I guess they enjoy it. Like we did. We probably looked as silly to our parents as the younger people do to us now I have idea.

LILLY: They're just jealous because they can't do it.

DODSON: Personally it seems to me that anybody that can jump up and down can dance.

PETERSON: If you can't jump up and down, you're out of luck.

DODSON: I guess I'm a little prejudice.

PETERSON: I like to waltz better than anything. Given my choices, I like a good old waltz. My husband can waltz. ? We didn't go any dances except just ? ...oh we were very innocent. ?

DODSON: Well, puppet dance halls were more or less frowned on then, weren't they?

PETERSON: Yes, they didn't have down here. I mean there wasn't such a thing as a puppet dance hall. We had no shows, we had food in Burbank and there was a pool hall and everybody hated it. But there was a pool hall here then. And we had wineries. People liked to drink wine evidentially because we had a Coors Winery up at the ? and the Danville Winery which is down there, on Grand View. So I suppose they could go to a winery if they wanted ? ?

DODSON: How did you celebrate things like the 4th of July when you were in your teens.

PETERSON: Firecrackers. My husband bought the firecrackers but there wouldn't be anything else. But he was



buying firecrackers. The big roof he would shoot off and we would have the little lady fingers ? we could shoot off.

DODSON: Was there much in the way of having bands and parades and speeches and that?

PETERSON: Oh yeah, they had baseball games too when I was a teenager, uh-huh. In January we had a Burbank baseball team and maybe once in Glendale ? And again all day affairs as we called it you know. Different things to do or the things that were going on. The firecrackers would be moving. And it was just a homey get together in various cities.

DODSON: Did you feel that more was made of holidays then then there is the case now?

PETERSON: Yes, in a different way. More people, they were closer, people were closer now. Well, it was so informal and everybody knew everybody. You know in a small town.

LILLY: Yes, a small town.

PETERSON: A small town and everybody knew everyone else and so it was just a town get together was all. It was like a family get together.

LILLY: Did you celebrate Halloween?

PETERSON: Yes, I didn't so much. But the boys did. And every 19 ? it was and the day after Halloween we started school ? hardware store with a wagon, a great big wagon right on top of it and it was a slopey roof you know too. I don't know how they ever got up there, the boys did. But they had a ? real estate office next to the hardware store just a little box building. And they put that up on the church steps and they put ? I can remember all those things of course the girls really enjoyed it seeing what happened but they never took a part in it. They didn't have anything to do with it. I know worse than that. We had...you know the houses were ? in those days. All with outdoor get togethers. So parties in the alley like everyone else and at that time we had about four in the family. My uncle and my cousin and eight children and my mother. It was a big family. So every Halloween they'd take that building and move it down below. So it was rather inconvenient when you get up with that many people and then that building had to be put back in place

before the ? was gone. So one night, the next Halloween night came along and my cousin and my uncle said, "These people Holly, we'll fix that up so that won't happen again." So they took that building and moved it forward. Just moved it forward. Then it stands up. There was quite a commotion out there that night. I can see it right now. They never did it again. And now it's...?

DODSON: No, I can imagine that was pretty effective.

PETERSON: It was. They never came back. We never had it knocked over again. That's all they did. They just moved it forward.

DODSON: Do you remember when plumbing was installed in the houses?

PETERSON: Yes, we would begin to install it. Let's see, mother built her house in 1908 and she had the bathroom built in it but didn't put the fixtures in it and didn't have it plumbed. There was plumbing missed I guess or something but she was planning on having it done. And then she couldn't afford to have it done that time because she had made enough money by the time my father was killed in 1905 and this was 1908 so she could buy a lot. She bought



two lots for \$120 a lot on the corner of 5th and Tom Avenue in Burbank. It's really falling down. She had that money and she had written to an aunt that she'd stayed a year with in Kentucky who's quite well to do and this aunt had taken her from her farm in Nebraska for a year when she was 13 to teach her a little to be a lady and a little etiquette that she thought she wasn't getting in farm life. And she said how she had to put her shoes out in the hall every morning for the maid to clean and all that sort of thing. She was use to living on a farm where they scrap their shoes and they were scraped in the back porch not in the house. But anyway she wrote the letter and told her that she had saved enough and bought these lots that she was unhappy because she said wanted to save and get a house. So the aunt sent her \$1,000 because she thought she deserved it. She'd raised her family and been independent and worked very hard and she felt she deserved it so she sent her \$1,000 and said was to build a house and put in her name and that it was for her and her children. But to put it in her name because none of us were of age. And so she did. It cost a little over \$1,000 plus ? build that house and it was a two story house. And it only had one bathroom then but she didn't get the plumbing in and of course there was no electricity here then so it

wasn't wired. But later she had it wired. And she put ? And she had the plumbing put in. I think when I was a senior in high school ?

DODSON: Now what year would that have been?

PETERSON: That was about 1914 that she had it put in.

DODSON: And how about electricity...when was that installed?

PETERSON: That came...the first electricity in Burbank was I think in 1914 too. Because I was in a play in high school and we had the stage lights, gaff lights you know on to the stage. And the night you had planned to turn the electricity on and we were so thrilled to think we had electric lights for the play that night. And it was in my junior year, in 1914.

DODSON: Now had you been lighting your house with kerosene lamps before that?

PETERSON: Oh yes, kerosene lamps. We each had our own lamp in our bedroom and there was the big lamp down on the dining table and there was one in the kitchen. We all sat around the kitchen table to study our lessons. Get our lessons...shut the door off the dining room and ? to people. And my uncle, my

cousin, my mother sat in the dining room to read and quiet and the children, little ones put to bed ? Every night she had to do that. We had to work too you know. Children...that's another thing I think is the reason the children today are more of a problem than they were in those days. That we had to work. When I was in high school. And my sister when we started the high school we had...one of us would make five beds upstairs to keep the bedrooms before we went to school. And we not only had to wash dishes and stack the dishes with that many people. It was in the tub all the time. We had to wash and dry the dishes sweep the kitchen floor so we could go to school and we had to be to school at 9:00. Now that was my first year in high school. And I remember one time I thought I was going to be late and I didn't want to be late, so I didn't sweep the floor and my mother came down to school and took me out of class. She said, "You're going to sweep that floor."

DODSON: Is that right? She was strict with those chores that had to be done.

PETERSON: That's right. Oh, when you had to do it, you had to do it. And I was embarrassed to death, it never happened again. But that's how strict they were.



But you know they learned. To keep appointments and do what they're told to do and do what you're suppose to do. I guess that's how you learn. It seems sort of strict but then it's necessary.

DODSON: Your mother baked her own bread did you tell me?

PETERSON: Baked her own bread and she had a whole kitchen table full of bread and cinnamon rolls and she made her own noodles and ? cookies and ?

DODSON: You didn't keep a cow or anything like that though?

PETERSON: Yes, we had a cow. Oh yes, that was one of the first things she bought after my father died was a cow. She paid \$35 for it. And the lady that sold it to her gave her a receipt and she said, "One cow with a crumpled horn...\$35." It had one horn. I think I still have the receipt in a box I kept.

DODSON: Was that one of the responsibilities of the children to milk the cow?

PETERSON: I never...she would let the girls do it. The girls could not do outdoor chores. The girls had to do house work and the boys had to outside work. And my brother Milt, he feed the cow and he had a pony too

? Feed the pony and then milked the cow and feed the chickens and we washed dishes and made beds and swept floors.

DODSON: So you were able to produce quite a little bit of your own food then. With the chickens and the cow.

PETERSON: Oh yes, they did. We raised...and always had all of our eggs and milk and butter. We made our own butter and cottage cheese she use to make too. Later on she had two cows. In fact, we sold milk. My brother and I use to take milk around and ? ?

DODSON: I don't remember that.

PETERSON: And you'd deliver milk in those cans because you could invert the lid and it would be tight so it couldn't get any dirt in there you see. And we took, 7 or 8 or I don't know how many customers we had on a stick and she'd take one end of the stick and I the other and we'd walk around to the different houses and deliver that pan of milk to everybody.

DODSON: Do you happen to remember the price of the milk what you sold it for maybe?

PETERSON: No, I can't tell you. Because she took care of all the money and I was just little. I have a book in here though that where she'd charge so much to iron on a shirt and so much for washing this and she did mending and she did sewing and the washing and ironing and practical nursing. She did everything she could to do. And she had it priced down, something so it would be legal. The only time I ever heard her complain she was doing Jim Jeffries, his washing and ironing.

DODSON: Was that the boxer?

PETERSON: The boxer. And his shirts was just about twice as big as anyone else you know. And she said, well she didn't how high she did his for the same price because she charged by the article or not... So the same price because his shirts were twice as large. I remember that. She felt that wasn't enough money for that great big shirt she had to iron. That's the only time I ever remember her complain about work. And she work hard and she was always cheerful. She sang when she worked a lot.

DODSON: You knew Jim Jeffries then?

PETERSON: Oh yeah.



DODSON: He was the heavy weight boxing champion. He lived here in Burbank?

PETERSON: I remember when we lived down on Vine Street and Flower. He came down and he came down with a horse and buggy to get the clothes and it was a hot day in July or so in the middle of summer. And we had a window down there. ? cows and a lot of supplies and so Mrs. Jeffries if I wouldn't get a drink of water. She was hot. So I went to the windmill and we had an old tin cup out there. You know all the kids drank out of that and they're hanging out there, heaven knows how long. And I don't when it had been washed last either and I filled that cup and took it to her. And she gave me a nickel for bringing her a glass of water. And that was a fortune to me. But I didn't know what to do with it so I gave it to my mother. We always...all the money we earned we gave to our mother. We never kept...we never had any money to spend. There's no such thing as spending money for children in those days. In fact, I think the most money she ever gave me was ten cents when I was a senior in high school, she gave me ten cents once and I didn't know what to do with it. I saved it around in my pocket for awhile and then finally I put up in the sugar bowl in the cupboard and it just laid there in that sugar bowl.

DODSON: What sort of gifts did you get for Christmas?

PETERSON: Well, most of the time we didn't get any gifts until we were older and then not much. ? If it wasn't as cold or something like that. But we always had a tree and we spent two weeks before Christmas...they cut the...at that time that one paper had a green sheet and the other had a pink sheet in it. And we couldn't afford to buy paper to make Christmas decorations so we cut all the margins off of the paper and then we'd make chains out of them, green and pink you know to make chains.. And we'd string them all around the picture molding. We use to have picture molding in those days you know and string around picture molding and then over the dining room table. Bring them into the dining room table, over the dining room table and so when we ate the Christmas dinner. And we always had a good Christmas dinner and then one night before Christmas mamma always fried dough. And she had her big dish pan there and she fried dough to put in that pan and we could eat all we want. And she'd fry it until we were just full of donuts. And that was a big treat because that was once a year that we got that. And another night we made popcorn and popcorn balls and was a treat because we only did that once a year too. That was a once a year thing. The only time

we had ice cream was on 4th of July. And our homemade cranker would crank ice cream out 4th of July because that was our special. And she never bought candy. But when we went to Sunday school the Sunday school use to give a little box of...a cardboard box of that hard candy for each child in the Sunday school and we use to get those and that was the only candy we ever got. But I think that's the reason we all good teeth. I still have my own teeth and I never need them drilled. And I think ? sweets...?

DODSON: It actually probably paid off for you in the long run.

PETERSON: I think so. Most all in the family have good teeth. No one has plates you know. And I was just 83.

DODSON: Was it customary in your family to have the younger children believe in Santa Claus at that time?

PETERSON: Oh my yes. I hated to give it up myself. Even though we didn't get anything much I hated to give it up. The only time I remember getting some gifts was when I was four years old...this is back in Nebraska though, and mamma's aunt, the same aunt that had given her the money to build a house, had



sent a box with toys and various things for the children and in it was two dolls. And one was a large doll and one was a smaller doll with a cloth body but you'd press it's back and it would said, "Papa." And mamma gave a larger doll to my sister because she was older and then I got the doll that said "Papa." Well my oldest brother was one the children that had to investigate and find out how everything worked. He had to know everything about everything. So I had to wash dishes when I was four years old, so did Cara ? my sister. She'd wash and I'd dry and she...

PETERSON: Right, at age four you washed...

PETERSON: You stood on apple boxes. I never ? a kitchen table because we had no stools ? to stand. One to wash and an another to stand against the dishes. And we did that and we had to both stand on boxes because I was as tall as Shelia. She was a shorter person, ? And anyway I had to put my doll down to wash the dishes so I came back to get my doll to play with. I put it on the bed and when I came back to get it to play with, there was no doll. I couldn't find the doll anywhere and I began crying and papa wanted to know what was going on. And I said, "I can't find my doll." I put in the bedroom and I can't

find it." So mamma and papa started looking and papa found Ben ? around the house. And he cut that doll open ? all that wax. ? and all it was filled with sawdust I guess. And of course it was flat, nothing but a piece of flat cloth you know with a head on it. It had a china head and the top of it, it was broken there. Oh I felt terrible. It spoiled my Christmas entirely. But mamma fixed it up. She had cotton. She didn't have any...she put cotton in it, it was kind of limpy but it still was a doll. And that was my first doll. The only one I had for a good many years. I never had another doll. ? We made things though. The last year my father was alive in 1905 in California and the Christmas in 1904 that would be, he was working in the barn and we were curious because there were cracks in the barn but we couldn't find out what he was doing. He was hammering and sawing and ? there in the barn. So Christmas morning come, he made a doll bed for me and a doll cradle for Elsie and a wagon for Glenn and he painted a wagon all red except the handle and he had a note on that on the side, it said, he ran out of paint but papa would finish it after Christmas because he run out of the paint so he had a note. And he made a little school engine for my older brother. He was very handy. He could make things.

DODSON: Yes, make a little steam engine. That was...

PETERSON: Yes, he was that handy. He was quite an intelligent man although he didn't have his schooling, but he could do things. ? with his hands and he made pretty good money out in California. I don't know for those days \$2.50/\$3.00 a day was big money in those days you know. Because most people worked for a dollar less a day. So anyway we had a big Christmas that year but after that I guess he was gone after that. ? outside of decorating and ? a big Christmas dinner.

DODSON: His death was quite sudden then?

PETERSON: Oh yes. He had gotten a job at a hotel in Los Angeles. The cotton boss' ? and he'd gone to the lumber yard...I guess we'd figured that's what happened to get some lumber for the building where he was working. Anyway the lumber yard caught on fire while he was there and he was electrocuted. A live wire had burned and fell on him getting out and he was electrocuted. So mamma...he didn't come home and she wondered but he had been staying there and not coming home every night but he come ? back and forth and we'd only see him on the weekends. But Sundays we really didn't have him come home. So I



happened to be down at the neighbors, Mrs. Plummer, our house. After Sunday school and I'd stopped in with one of the girls after a little bit and I was sitting out there in a swing and one of the girls, one of the older girls was out there. And I heard Mr. Plummer tell Mrs. Plummer. He'd gotten a paper the Los Angeles paper and he said that there's an article in here that says there's an unidentified man in Los Angeles that had been killed and he had a pocket knife that said, "W.H.C." on it. And he said, "I know that Bill Cow had a knife like that. I knew he had two." He had his initials on it and he had two. And he said, "I think you better find out if that's Bill." So I overheard it see and ? heard it too, their daughter and so she took me back home and he came up and told my uncle who was standing out in the yard about it and my uncle never even told my mother and he said that he'd take the train to Los Angeles and to identify the body. So he took the train in and it was real cold then ? and in those days ? I guess. His body was sent out and put in...we had no mortuaries in those days...put out in the living room in a coffin and we never got to see him before ?

DODSON: Well, people weren't carrying any identification then.

PETERSON: No, no. ? He just happen to have his initials on his knife is all. I don't how he happened to have it but he did. He was carrying the old knife then. He didn't have any check or anything in his pocket or anything and I don't know whether they paid by check or just cash in those days. I don't know how they did it. Often they paid...no Charlie Cline use to pay by check. When my parents and uncle were, after they worked for Jim Jeffries, ? they worked for Charlie Cline and he had a large chicken farm with chickens in Burbank here. He had 10,000 hens it was big for those days. And use to pay by check but that's the first time I've seen checks I think. I think I was 22 years old then before it came. I know he'd send me downtown, Fred would, my cousin, to cash his check. You see they had to work six days a week, you never could get to a bank. So he'd send me down to the bank and I'd cash his check and they'd give to me in gold. He got \$75 a month and they'd give it to me in gold. And I carry home in my hand bag. I didn't have a pocket book. I'd carry it home in my hands, perfectly safe. A 13 year old girl walking around with \$75 of gold in her hand and nobody would bother me.

DODSON: I was going say you felt perfectly safe and got it back every time.

PETERSON: Every time. Never lost it. Always safe. Same way when I was 13 I use to hitch up the mustang pony and drive to the nearest street car line in Glendale and driving...it was the corner on the Hillside above the end of the car line and drive in there and tie to the horse to a pepper tree and filled up a bucket of water for him and hitch him to the bedroom and take the street car into Los Angeles and get off at 6th and Hill and walk over to 3rd or so and Spring to Ralph's grocery store and put in an order for groceries and there would be \$40 or more worth of groceries and they ship it out in the train. Of course she could get it much cheaper than she could in Burbank and so she'd get flour by the barrel and of course she had to buy supplies ? baking and what not and have it shipped out. And then I'd go to the ? store on Broadway, the Broadway Department store and buy calico for girl's dresses and chambray for boys...she made all the boy's shirts and girls dresses and did all her own sewing and the cooking and everything else. And then working for other people. I don't know how she held up. I can't see how she did it now.

LILLY: ? the clothes you were wearing. What did they look like?



PETERSON: The clothes. ? not difficult really, short sleeves and ? a little collar on top. Nothing fancy about them.

LILLY: And ?

PETERSON: We made our own under things out of flour sacks. And all our flour was four X flour. And we had four X's and they were very hard to get the four X's out and so we had four X's on your under things.

DODSON: Well, in those days they didn't waste flour sacks did they?

PETERSON: Nothing. Later they made flour sacks out of the calico patterns you know. I made dresses out of those. But they did it at first. Just they're white and ? and you'd wash that four X flour off the best you could and you didn't waste it. ? put that pants and his under shirts maybe they'd hide them better -- it didn't have the four X's on it. But I use to like the sleeve with my brother. I was about ? you know how children do. I was sitting there one day when a neighbor girl came over. She lived across the road from us and she'd began saying, "I see the four X on Goldie's pants." And I was so embarrassed. I never got on that swing again only

to sit down, I would never stand up again. Just on account of the four X, I don't think I minded the rest of it just the four X's.

DODSON: Would those things eventually frayed out? Or were they there as long as the clothes?

PETERSON: Well, they generally stayed there just about no matter how many times you'd wash them. And she washed the white clothes with yellow pulp and lye soap you know and...

DODSON: Did she make her own soap?

PETERSON: No, she didn't make her own soap. But she'd get this bar of soap with this here yellow nappa soap she'd call it and then she'd boil them in a boiler with lye water and wash water and she just had that boiling all the time. All the white clothes, you'd wash them by hand and then you'd boil them in the boiler and you'd take them out and then you'd hang them on the line. That was how you washed your clothes in those days. But it seemed like you couldn't get that four X out of there. ? I don't know. It was faint. It got fainter. You didn't dare do that with your clothes you bought. As I said we wore dresses until they were washed so you

didn't know what color they were. ? and then you'd wash them. And then they got handed down to all the children ?.

DODSON: You bought your flour then in 24 or 48 lb. sizes I suppose?

PETERSON: The flour. It happened in barrels. Well, yeah of course she got in barrels...yeah in the sack I don't know why. That wasn't nothing but sacks I guess because she got flour sacks too but I know she bought in barrels too. I don't how...

DODSON: A barrel would weigh about 96 lbs. didn't it?

PETERSON: ? back home. I remember seeing them putting it in the pantry. We had a pantry off to the kitchen. ? our sink and cupboards in the pantry where we put all our groceries. We didn't have refrigerators in those days.

DODSON: The barrels I don't know about but some of my relatives had a store in which they sold the sacks of flour and I know there was a standard 48 lb. sack and the 24 lb.



PETERSON: Well, she got the largest flour sack when she got them they were a big sack. I thought they were more than that. I...

DODSON: It could be. I sort of remember 48 lb. sizes and a few 24's.

PETERSON: Well, they just looked like...? But she bought sack flour too as well as but I know she bought by the barrel too so it maybe when ran out of a barrel she bought sacks, I don't how. But I know that she...unless they were the neighbor's flour sacks. I don't know. Up into high school even. I remember we cut flour sacks.

DODSON: Well, I imagine those sacks were fairly good quality, weren't they?

PETERSON: Oh yes. No there was nothing wrong with them. If you could the four X's out why...? Of course we didn't have much length on anything or anything like that but it was reasonable.

DODSON: I don't think Lilly would like that system.

PETERSON: Well, it didn't hurt us any. I grew up and I'm healthy and I'm growing old and I had a wonderful

life. I was married over 60 years and had a wonderful husband.

LILLY: Do you wear pants now?

PETERSON: Yeah, I do too. I like to wear slacks.

DODSON: Do you feel that that is an improvement in women's costume, going to the slacks instead the dresses?

PETERSON: Well, maybe not in appearance but it a convenience.